

# “That’s My King: The Authority of the Messiah”

Matthew 7:1-28

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I am a Christian

I am a disciple of Jesus Christ

# Key Teachings Matthew 7

- Criticism (7:1-6)
- Expect Good Things from God (7:7–11)
- Fulfilling the Law and the Prophets (7:12)
- Responding to Jesus words: Four Warnings (7:13–27)
- The Authority of the Teacher Recognized (7:28–29)

Scene 1:  
The Broad and Narrow Roads  
(7:13–14)

““Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”

Matthew 7:13-14 NIV

## Scene 2

False Prophets: Good and Bad Fruit

(7:15–20)

““Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.

By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.”

Matthew 7:15-20 NIV

# Scene 3

Insiders and Outsiders:  
Things May Not Be As They  
Seem  
(7:21-23)



““Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’”

Matthew 7:21-23

## Scene 4

TwoHouse Builders: Hearing and Doing  
(7:24-27)

““Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.””

Matthew 7:24-27 NIV

“When Jesus had finished saying these things,  
the crowds were amazed at his teaching,  
because he taught as one who had authority,  
and not as their teachers of the law.”

Matthew 7:28-29 NIV

## Matthew 7:13-29

SLIDE - In our culture today, is there a difference in saying “I am a Christian” versus “I am a disciple of Jesus Christ.”

Discipleship is hard. The sermon on the Mount is Jesus’ discourse on discipleship.

The golden rule of 7: 12 concludes, for the most part, the discourse on discipleship. What we come to now in 7:13-27 underlines the importance of responding to what Jesus has said, and gives clear warnings of the consequences of failing to respond.

Responding to Jesus Words: Four Warnings: (7:13-27) SLIDE

The warnings about failing to respond to Jesus words are presented in four scenes or scenarios. These are fascinating, and were going to look at each one, because each in a different way, draws out the contrast between a right and wrong response, between the true and the false, between the saved and the lost. Jesus regularly offers distinct and clear choices to his hearers. He delights in presenting antithetical choices between one path and another. We have already heard Jesus ask: Will you follow the letter of the law or its spirit? Will you practice righteousness to be seen by men or to be seen by God? Will you serve God or money?

So, in essence, what we are going to look at today is a rhetorical conclusion to the discourse on discipleship. The aim here is to motivate the hearers to take appropriate action. The message here is clear. That those who have now “heard” Jesus teaching receive no benefit from it unless they also put it into practice.

I want you to notice how these four sections press closer, and closer, and closer to home: the first is a contrast between the saved and the lost.

Scene 1: The Broad and Narrow Roads (7:13-14) SLIDE

What is the contrast here? There are two roads (7:13–14), a wide road that is easy now, but leads to destruction, and a narrow road that is hard now, but leads to life. Many take the easy road, perhaps largely by accident. But a few find the hard road, which implies that they are looking.

This is a stark and clear contrast between “destruction” and “life”. This is not talking about the degree of success in attempting to follow the lifestyle of the kingdom of heaven. No. This is talking about either being in or out, saved or lost. The two routes described in this passage lead in different directions and wind up in different destinations. (Principle of the path). Without using the specific words this scene sets before us the radical alternative of heaven or hell.

When Jesus said this, who was hearing? It was said, first and foremost, for his disciples. But remember, there was a large crowd that had gathered around him. Most of the people in that crowd were disciples, but only in a loose sense. Most of them were not even dedicated disciples. ***Jesus wanted to win them, but not by deception, so he told them the plain truth.***

Jesus says his road leads to life, but before it ends, it is narrow and hard. To this day, many who are lightly committed to Christ need to hear the same word. On the broad, easy road, people do as they please.

In Luke 13, Jesus is asked, “Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?” In his reply, Jesus uses the imagery of a narrow door, is “yes.” This is consistent with the assumption throughout the sermon on the Mount. Disciples of Jesus Christ will stand out from the culture in which they live, and as such will be the subject of ridicule and persecution. The narrow way is hard. And because the majority are on this wide road to destruction, doesn’t that add an urgency to the call to “seek first God’s kingship and righteousness?” Shouldn’t this increase our call to evangelism?

Scene 2: False Prophets: Good and Bad Fruit (7:15-20) SLIDE

Jesus says that there are two ways, one easy, one hard; two gates, one broad, one narrow; taken by two crowds, one large, one small; ending in two destinations, death and life. He also says there are two prophets, the false and the true. Lets read this passage. SLIDE

This scene concerns outsiders who merely pretend to be insiders. Here Jesus focuses on the danger posed by false prophets. The term “prophet” puts these people within the community of the disciples, but they are not within the kingdom of God. They are imposters. They are outsiders pretending to be insiders. The specific focus on prophecy is found only in verse fifteen, ***while the broader***

***imagery of trees and fruit could apply to other people who profess to be godly but are not. It is by their fruits that they must be tested.***

Remember, in the Old Testament, false prophets are a recurrent problem. Jeremiah was frequently pitted against popular prophets who proclaimed “peace” when there was no peace. In 1 Kings 22 where the false court prophets tell Jehoshaphat and the king of Israel to go to war. Well, false prophets also became a problem in the post-apostolic church. ***The New Testament is full of warnings against the damage that false teaching could do to the life and health of Christian congregations.*** These false prophets have an implied authority claim because what they are saying is supposed to be received directly from God. This makes them even more dangerous.

The imagery of wolves dressed as sheep shows the contrast between their appearance and what they are “inside”. Being disguised as sheep, they claim to be a part of the flock of God. ***They are intentional deceivers.*** They are consciously putting on an act. False prophets troubled Israel throughout the Old Testament. They troubled the apostles in the New Testament, and they have troubled the church down through the centuries even to this very day.

To complete their disguise, they use biblical language even while they distort its meaning. They recite creeds, but reinterpret their meaning. They have credentials – graduate degrees and ordination certificates, and hold pulpits in large and influential churches.

But their disguises fail if sound leaders watch both the teaching and the life of the false teachers. We distinguish true from false by examining the fruit of their ministry and the patterns of their lives. As Jesus says, “every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit”.

Notice in verses 17-19, Jesus begins to speak about “every tree.” In this way, Jesus takes the principle for false prophets and applies it to all people who falsely claim to belong to the Lord: “By their fruit you will recognize them” (7:20). It takes time to grow fruit, and it takes time to examine fruit. We must not be hasty; we should let the pattern of a life reveal everything in due time. It cannot be otherwise. People can pretend only for so long. No one evades God’s justice forever. Bad trees, trees that bear no fruit, are cut down and thrown into the fire (7:19). But it is not enough to examine others. We must watch ourselves as well.

### Scene 3: Insiders and Outsiders: Things May Not Be As They Seem (7:21-23) SLIDE

#### SLIDE -7:21-23

This scene looks at those who think they are insiders but they're not. They are deceived. Jesus is giving a warning here about false claims of discipleship. I want to tie this back to the question I asked at the opening of class... In our culture today, is there a difference between being a Christian and a disciple of Jesus Christ.

This is clearly connected to his warning about false prophets in the previous passage. Jesus compares false prophets to trees that bear bad fruit and shall be thrown into the fire. In 7:23, Jesus also judges those who falsely profess Christ: "away from me, you evildoers!"

These warnings apply to us in two ways. First Jesus describes false prophets so that we can be watchful. Secondly, he warns his disciples to not succumb to their influence or follow in their footsteps.

These people in this passage thought they were "in." Do you think this is a hypothetical warning? Can you think of any instances where this teaching is reality? Judas preached, performed miracles, cast out demons, and walked with Jesus for three years, but he did not know Jesus in a personal, saving way. Similarly, there are ordained pastors who become believers each year. They say, "I preached and counseled and baptized in Jesus' name, but I did not know him as my Savior. I never understood the gospel, never knew Christ's love until this year." This happened in our own church with one of our ruling elders.

What are the signs of a genuine disciple of Jesus Christ? ... Doing the will of the Father, and knowing Jesus personally.

Many profess faith with their lips and even produce some good deeds, but do not follow the whole counsel of Christ. ***In Luke 6:46, Jesus says, "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"*** Selective obedience—obedience to the commands we happen to like—is not genuine obedience at all. If we truly confess that Jesus is Lord, we must also be willing to bend our will to his, even if what He teaches is difficult or even foolish to the world around us.



Most Americans see ethics from a Judeo-Christian perspective. We gladly follow biblical rules because they seem like common sense. They describe the way we do things. It is a blessing to agree with the word of the Lord. But simply agreeing with biblical teaching does not test us much. The test of loyalty, the test of our submission to the Lord, comes when His will crosses ours. ***We truly obey (we submit) to God whenever we obey a command that requires painful or countercultural actions. So then, we can call Jesus Lord and not know him as Lord of our life.***

Scene 4: 2 House Builders: Hearing and Doing (7:24-27) SLIDE

SLIDE (7:24-27)

Jesus says that two builders construct two houses on two foundations (Matt. 7:24–27). In dry weather, every building plan and every house look sound. But when the rain comes, the rivers rise, and the winds blow, they reveal the quality of the work (7:25). If the catastrophes of life fall upon the solid house, it will not fall. But when troubles befall the house that rests on a flawed foundation, it will collapse.

Similarly, any creed or philosophy seems to work when life is easy. ***But when the storms of life beat upon us, those who build on Christ remain strong and have hope.*** A secular person may say, “I have faced many storms on my own and stayed strong.” But what about the final storm, when life ends?

Everyone must ask, “What is the rock on which I build? Is my foundation sure?” The Bible says God is a rock, a refuge for his covenant people (Pss. 27:5; 31:2–3; 42:9; 62:1–7; 78:35; 92:15; 94:22). Jesus later says that he is the rock. ***He also says that the wise man “hears these words of mine and puts them into practice”*** (Matt. 7:24), whereas the foolish man hears them and does not put them into practice. His house collapses with a crash (7:26–27). Why does Jesus end the Sermon on the Mount with the words “a great crash” (7:27)?

This is hardly the upbeat way in which preachers typically end their sermons. But Jesus is making a point. ***It is not enough to study or applaud the words of Jesus. We must do what he says. Otherwise, we are in danger of hypocrisy, in danger of facing a great crash.***

## The Authority of the Teacher Recognized (7:28-29) SLIDE

In his epilogue, Matthew comments that the crowds were amazed at Jesus' authority. "When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law" (7:28–29). He spoke with royal assurance, with sovereign majesty. He legislated, on his own authority, the standards of life in God's kingdom. "Truly I say to you" is his distinctive statement. In Jesus' day, the rabbis constantly quoted earlier rabbis to corroborate their teachings. Today, adults quote noted experts and students validate their claims with footnotes.

Jesus challenged the old traditions that the scribes quoted. He was a legislator, not a commentator.<sup>6</sup> He spoke on his own authority, not the authority of others. He insisted on the supremacy of his teaching; the wise build their lives upon his word, for he is the Savior and Lord.

### Conclusion:

we have studied some hard teaching today. But what we study today's the truth. These are the very words of Jesus Christ. But as we close, I want us to close with the truth of the hope that we have in Christ, our Savior. If you want encouragement in what we have in Christ, read the book of 1 John. Here are John's closing words in chapter 5:

<sup>13</sup> I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. <sup>14</sup> This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. <sup>15</sup> And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.

<sup>18</sup> We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the One who was born of God keeps them safe, and the evil one cannot harm them. <sup>19</sup> We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. <sup>20</sup> We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true by being in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.